

BT

921

.M3

IMMORTALITY

JAMES M. McLESKEY, D.D.



Class BT 921

Book . M3

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

IMMORTALITY

(One of a series of subjects, under the
general head, "The Mysteries of
Religion Simplified.")

—By—

adms
J a m e s M. M c L e s k e y. D. D.

Author of
"Is Christianity the Only True
Religion?" etc.

Cumberland Presbyterian Pub. House
Nashville, Tenn.

LC 19232

10

BT921
.M3

Copyright, 1923, by
James M. McLeskey

MAY -1 1924

©C1A792425

FOREWORD

This book contains only one of the author's series of subjects under the general head, "The Mysteries of Religion Simplified." Our purpose in this and in the entire series is to strengthen the faith of those who are the victims of sincere doubt, by presenting evidence to assure them that the claims of the Christian religion will successfully stand the acid test of investigation and hard reason. While these subjects are adapted to people of all ages, our primary purpose is to answer for young people the perplexing religious questions which

often confront them in those adolescent years when their religious convictions are often unsettled for want of a proper knowledge of religious facts. Young people too often become the victims of false teachers during this unsettled age, when, with open minds, they eagerly scan the ecclesiastical shore, seeking for a safe place to tie. Too many people have suffered unnecessary distress over questions which could have been answered in a moment by those who understand. Settled convictions and triumphant faith are necessary to religious happiness and spiritual power.

A list of the entire series on "The Mysteries of Religion" will be found in the back of this volume. We trust that they may be of help to any who may be perplexed on questions of religion. We are especially hopeful that they may find their way into the hands of many young people, to protect them from the tragedy of a flickering faith.

C O N T E N T S

Immortality

Realization Limited.

A Seeming Discrepancy.

Atomic Change.

Identity Perpetual.

Dr. Blake's Argument.

Mind and Soul Distinguished.

Positive Reasons:

The Bible Teaches Immortality.

History Testifies.

A Seeming Difficulty.

Justice Demands a Life to Come.

Physical Limitations.

Law of Demand and Supply.

Instinct and Immortality.

Conscience.

Arguments From Analogy.

The Testimony of the Dying.

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

—Longfellow.

IMMORTALITY

“If a man die, shall he live again?”—
Job 14: 14.

I appreciate the sacredness of this very personal question to every individual. I am mindful of the tragedy of a flickering faith and of mental doubts and fears, for, in the language of Paul, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” I therefore humbly undertake to say something, and to bring to your attention the practical philosophy of others, in this effort to vindicate the reasonableness of our hope. It is not our pur-

IMMORTALITY

pose in this chapter to enter into the question of future reward and future punishment. The question is, "Will one's identity be perpetuated after death?"

Realization Limited

Some may have doubts as to a life beyond the grave, simply because of their inability to fully realize that a blessing so tremendous will become a real fact. The blessing is so wonderful that they conclude that it is merely a dream, a fancy. Do not stake your faith upon your power to realize. Death would

IMMORTALITY

seem equally as fanciful were it not for the fact that the possibility of doubt on that point has been so completely overcome by observation. I went with my father, when I was a child, to a Tennessee town. A young man, sentenced to be hanged on that day, had asked for the privilege of talking with him. The gallows was near the jail. Everything was in readiness. While talking to him about the welfare of his soul, my father said to the unfortunate boy, "Do you realize that within two hours you will be in eternity?" He replied, "No; here are all my clothes

IMMORTALITY

that I am to wear, and everything seems to be ready, but it seems to me like the sun will go down this evening just as it did yesterday." Bring it home to yourself. Does it not seem fanciful that you—really you—are soon to enter "that mysterious realm where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death"? No; you cannot realize it. Are you not glad that this is true? It is a mysterious, but kind, economy that limits our realization to a horizon which conceals our heartaches yet to come.

One sense is developed at the expense of another. When one's sense of sight

IMMORTALITY

is lost, his sense of touch becomes more useful. Watch the blind piano tuner dissect the piano action and replace it. Wonderful were the qualities added to his sense of touch at the expense of his sense of sight. Likewise, this horizon which limits our realization, seems to add to our faith its romance, anticipation and the speculative element which make the future so interesting. Do not reject the fact of immortality simply because your realization is limited.

Picture for a moment our present life. Suppose that we had not yet lived this

IMMORTALITY

life, and yet in some mysterious way we were able to anticipate it. Candidly, would not this life seem like a dream, a fancy? After all, a life to come is no more mysterious than the life that we are living now.

A Seeming Discrepancy

The question before us involves not only the immortality of the soul, but also the resurrection of the body. And some might wonder if there is a serious discrepancy between Paul's expression in 1 Cor. 15: 50, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," and

IMMORTALITY

his teaching concerning the resurrection of the body, throughout the same chapter. Does this statement conflict with Job 19: 26, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"?

I quote from "A Picture of the Resurrection," by Dr. James M. Gray, published by Fleming H. Revell Company, which beautifully answers this question: " 'Flesh and blood' cannot inherit it, because that is just another name for our human nature as it is, and Paul has already taught us that a change is necessary. Some of the early heretics made

IMMORTALITY

so much of this expression, 'flesh and blood,' as to jump at the conclusion that it disposed of a material resurrection altogether. As if Paul would so flatly contradict himself almost in the same breath! But the early fathers of the church opposed them, and cited as an argument the words of Jesus in Luke 24: 39, where He attested His own resurrection by saying to His disciples, 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.' Evidently 'flesh and bones' and 'flesh and blood' are not identical terms. Quoting the Numerical Bible, 'The blood applies to the present life. It

IMMORTALITY

is the vehicle of change. It is that which implies the need of continual sustenance and renewal. A body which needs no renewal cannot need blood to renew it.' Was it for this reason that Jesus spake of Himself not as having 'flesh and blood,' but 'flesh and bones'? He poured out His blood, and left it with the earthly life that He had lived. But now He had entered on a new sphere, retaining all that made Him truly man, but not the conditions of the old earthly life. Is this what Paul means? May we say that 'flesh and blood' shall not inherit the kingdom of God in this sense of it?"

IMMORTALITY

Dr. Gray's explanation is beautiful. "Flesh and blood," then, applies to the natural body, "flesh and bones" to the spiritual body. "Flesh and blood" applies to the body "sown in corruption," "flesh and bones" to the body "raised in incorruption." The same body, but the same body changed, rearranged, renovated, made fit for its new home.

Atomic Change

Another question naturally arises: Is it possible that our same body will be raised, in view of the scientific fact that the particles that compose the main bulk

IMMORTALITY

of the body are displaced about every seven years, and are superseded by other particles, and especially when the body has died, decomposed, supported vegetation, animals have eaten of that vegetation, and those animals have been eaten by other individuals? Is it possible where cannibals are in the habit of devouring one another?

I quote the late Dr. Watts: **“It is very probable that a newborn infant, in its muscles and nerves (and especially in its bowels and bones) has some orig-*

*Note: Ewing's Lectures, p. 138.

IMMORTALITY

inal, essential and constituent tubes, fibers or staminal particles (if I may so call them) which remain the same, and unchanged, through all the stages and changes of life, in following years, how much-soever the external and fleshy parts may be changed. And some philosophers maintain that the growth of the animal body is nothing but the dilation, stretching or spreading of these fibers, tubes or membranes by the interposition of new additional particles; which additional and accidental particles are the only things which are in perpetual flux, and always changing.

IMMORTALITY

And it may be added, also, that perhaps these essential, staminal particles are of such a nature as not to join and unite with other animal or human bodies, and constitute an essential constituent part of them ; and therefore, if mankind were all cannibals, and ate one another, as well as the flesh of beasts, yet the same staminal, or constituent particles, cannot belong to the bodies of two or more human persons.

“It has been said by some philosophers that the mere membranous parts of an animal body, though eaten by other animals, will not easily, if at all, digest ; and

IMMORTALITY

then they cannot be sanguified, or turned into blood; nor can they become nutritive juices, nor form the constituent and essential parts of other animals. Now, a great many of the original, constituent parts of the human body are membranous, for some suppose almost the whole body to be made of tubes and juices, with little interspersed fibers, which are added by nutrition. And how far the bones, that is, the original, mere osseous substance, may be indigestible also, who can tell?

“Upon the whole, it seems that these essential, constituent, or staminal par-

IMMORTALITY

ticles, whatsoever they be, whether osseous or membranous, or of any other quality, and how few soever they be, always abide the same, even when the body is greatly enlarged by the perpetual interposition of additional nutritive particles, which are in continual flux. I say also that it seems that these unchanging parts, whether few or many, in union with the same soul, are abundantly sufficient to denominate Methuselah the infant, and Methuselah the aged, the same person; and then, also, these few essential, constituent particles, preserved by Divine Providence, and raised

IMMORTALITY

in the formation of a new body, and united to the same soul, are sufficient to denominate Methuselah dying, and Methuselah rising, the same person still, both soul and body.”

Identity Perpetual

It is obvious, regardless of our estimate of the philosophy of Dr. Watts, that this constant shifting of the particles that compose the body does not interfere with or change the identity. Our loved ones remain the same throughout the years, despite the removal of atoms by perspiration, attri-

IMMORTALITY

tion and secretion, and it is in this sense that our bodies will be the same in their resurrection form. After all, we are concerned not so much with the atoms that compose the body, but more with the personality—that which knows and is known—the identity. Regardless of atomic changes, if I can meet my loved ones in glory and recognize and love them as I do here, that will be heaven for me.

But instead of the resurrection change presenting a difficulty, it offers to me a blessing for which I am truly grateful. The bodies of the saints will be like unto

IMMORTALITY

the body of our dear Lord. They will be no longer subject to pain and disease, but will have greater capacity for the enjoyment of the love, laughter and triumph of eternal felicity.

Dr. Blake's Argument

Dr. Blake, speaking of the soul's immortality, said: "The objections, though they may be urged in different form, may all be resolved into one, which is as follows:

"The soul is material—a mere function of the brain—and consequently, at the dissolution of the body, will cease to

IMMORTALITY

exist. Those who advocate this theory are called, and properly so, materialists. The supporters of this theory claim that it is a new doctrine—a doctrine developed by distinguished scientists of the present century—a doctrine, too, necessarily resulting from a thorough knowledge of physical organism. In this assertion, however, they are sadly mistaken. The doctrine is as old as the sect of the Jews called the Sadducees, and in the early history of the Christian church we find the celebrated Origen combating and refuting the pernicious dogma. Indeed, the materialism of the present day

IMMORTALITY

is simply a repetition of the theory of all infidel philosophers, in all of the past ages, and in all countries, whether pagan or Mohammedan, Jewish or Christian. Hobbes, Volney, Hume, Voltaire, etc., revived the old, exploded theory of the ancients, and Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, etc., are 'repeaters,' or, to change the figure, the grotto through which the poisonous stream is to flow. Now let us calmly investigate this theory.

"What is matter? What are its essential properties? In answer to the last question, we reply they are, impenetrability, extension, figure, divisibility, inertia, etc.

IMMORTALITY

“By the impenetrability of matter we mean that no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time. For illustration, take a vessel and fill it with water, and the same vessel cannot, at the same time, be filled with any other liquid. Now, is this true of that phenomenon which we call mind, or spirit? Does it possess such a property? The attempt to even conceive of the mind as being thus restricted to a limited space, and so filling that space as that nothing else can occupy it at the same time, is revolting to all common sense.

“Extension as a property of matter

IMMORTALITY

means length, breadth and thickness—something that can be weighed or measured. But what would we think of a man who would speak of a pound of mind, a square yard of mind, ten gallons of mind, etc.?

“Figure means shape when applied to matter. Now, who can even conceive of mind as possessing shape? If so, what is its shape? Is it square? a triangle? a circle? or what?

“Divisibility is also a property of matter. Can the same be affirmed of mind? Can it be divided and subdivided into the minutest parts, as we can divide

IMMORTALITY

matter? Can it be cut, broken, pounded, etc., as we can do with matter? The idea is absurd. We might thus pass through the whole list, but surely this is enough to convince anyone that matter is not mind."

Distinction Between Mind and Soul

Dr. Blake has suggested a broad field of thought, but in addition to his strong arguments, I would call attention to the distinction between the mind and the soul.

One argument which materialists use

IMMORTALITY

to prove that the mind or spirit is a function of the brain, is that when the brain becomes diseased the mind ceases—is lost. But this argument deserves no consideration until they first prove that mind and spirit are the same, and that there is no soul in man independent of the brain.

In 2 Cor. 4: 16 we read: “But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” The fact is, there is a separate entity in a man, a spiritual intelligence independent of the mental. These two natures are vividly contrasted by Paul in the 7th

IMMORTALITY

chapter of Romans (verses 21-23): "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members,"

The following passages will throw additional light upon this question:

Rom. 8: 16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Eccl. 12: 7: "Then shall the dust re-

IMMORTALITY

turn to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

John 3: 6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Our Lord in Gethsemane said (Mark 14: 38): "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."

This spiritual nature is sometimes called soul, spirit, heart, inner man, etc. The word, mind, is generally used to express the action of the brain, but it is sometimes used to express the inner or spiritual man, as in Paul's language

IMMORTALITY

above. Verse 22 says "inner man." The word, "mind," in verse 23, is used in the same sense as "inner man" in verse 22. This same idea is a little more fully developed by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2: 14): "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This shows conclusively that this spiritual man is an intelligence distinct from the natural intelligence, though generally in close co-operation and association with the natural, yet

IMMORTALITY

sometimes in fierce conflict with it, as seen in the above statement of Paul to the Romans.

The truth of these Bible statements is verified by human experience. Have you not felt this conflict between conscience and natural inclinations; or between the flesh and the spirit?

We will not go into detail here as to the influence which the two separate entities—the natural man with its intellect, and the inner man with its separate intelligence—exert upon each other in this life. Nor will we discuss their respective powers and privileges in the

IMMORTALITY

realm of faith. But it will serve our present purpose to say that the primary function of our natural mind is to meet our needs in this life, and the primary function of the spiritual intelligence is to meet our needs in the life to come.

Dives had a soul during his natural life, yet his intellectual range was limited to the natural realm. But when he died, and his brain ceased to function, his intelligence expanded into the infinite realm, and he in hell was able to converse intelligently with Abraham, who was in heaven. This explains the sense in which the inner man has its

IMMORTALITY

intelligence independent of the work of the brain.

The intellectual responsibility, so to speak, changes from the natural to the spiritual man when the individual is in the twilight between life and death. This is clear from the many words of those who in the last moments of life were able to see into the other realm just in time to leave their testimonies.

The theory that we can in this life, through a human medium, converse with departed spirits is sophistry and superstition.

Having considered the objections, we

IMMORTALITY

will now give eight positive reasons why we believe that if a man die, he shall live again:

I.—Because the Bible Teaches It

Read 1 Pet. 1: 3-5; Phil. 1: 22, 23; 2 Cor. 5: 1, 6, 8; Matt. 10: 28; Heb. 11: 13-1 , and the story of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16). In the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, the 6th and 7th verses, we learn that when the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Space forbids that I mention all of

IMMORTALITY

the passages that teach a life beyond the grave. But all who have read the Bible are aware that this is the very warp and woof of Bible teaching. Since this is true, and in view of its fulfilled prophecies, the harmony of the writers, the unselfishness and impartiality of its writers, who recorded their points of weakness as well as their virtues; the fact that the Bible condemns falsehood and hypocrisy; that had the writers been hypocrites and untrue men they would not have spent their lives in the production of a work that would condemn its authors and then seal their testimony

IMMORTALITY

with their own blood; and many other points of evidence that we have developed under the subject, "Have We Reason to Believe That the Bible Is the Word of God," I conclude that the Bible must be true.

Then, since the Bible teaches a life beyond the grave, and since the Bible is true, I conclude there must be a life after death.

II.—History Tells of Those

Who Have Lived After Death

In the minds of those who have confidence in the Scriptures there can be no doubt as to the resurrection of Jesus

IMMORTALITY

Christ from the dead. But for the benefit of the agnostic, we would say that profane history substantiates the Bible account. Ignatius, of the second century, speaks of the resurrection day as being "the highest of all days." Theophilus, of the second century, said, "Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor the Lord's day, seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus completed His resurrection from the dead."

Clement of Alexandria, of the second century, said: "A Christian, according to the command of the gospel, observes

IMMORTALITY

the Lord's Day, thereby glorifying the resurrection of the Lord." Josephus said: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man; if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, and a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him: for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets

IMMORTALITY

had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.”

So we see that the resurrection of Jesus is a historic fact. We have such an abundance of evidence that there is left no room for reasonable doubt.

The resurrection of Jesus, then, proves the possibility of life after death. In John 11: 25, 26, in conversation with Martha, Jesus beautifully coupled our life to come with His resurrection in the following words: “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” In His resurrection He vouchsafed

IMMORTALITY

to us our own survival of death.

A Seeming Difficulty

I must pause just here long enough to consider a difficulty which presents itself to many Bible readers concerning the account of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Matt. 12: 40 we find the prophecy that Jesus was to be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. In Mark 15: 42 we learn that Jesus was crucified on "the day before the sabbath." Since the Jewish weekly sabbath was on Saturday, many think that He must have been crucified on Friday (hence Good Friday), and as the tomb was found empty very early on the

IMMORTALITY

first day of the week, it is difficult for one to figure three days and nights between Friday (afternoon) and the Sunday morning. But the difficulty disappears when we remember that the Jews observed other sabbaths, besides their weekly (seventh day) sabbath. We are told that the first day of the Passover week was a sabbath, no matter upon what day of the week it came (Ex. 12: 16; Lev. 23: 7; Num. 28: 16-18). Jesus must have been crucified before this Passover sabbath (not the weekly sabbath), because in John 19: 14 we are told that the day on which Jesus was

IMMORTALITY

tried and crucified was "the preparation of the passover." This Passover sabbath took place on the fifteenth Nisan. We have abundant evidence that the Passover sabbath in that year occurred on Thursday. The day before the Passover sabbath was Wednesday. So it is easy to understand when we figure His death at the close of Wednesday (about 6 p. m.) and his resurrection at the beginning of Sunday (probably slightly after 6 p. m. Saturday), that he was in the grave exactly three days and three nights.

The ancient philosophers, according

IMMORTALITY

to Smith's and Peloubet's Dictionary, regarded the translation of Enoch and that of Elijah as historical proofs of a place of abode other than the earth. I quote Josephus: "Now at this time Elijah disappeared from among them, and no one knows of his death to this very day. And indeed as to Elijah, and as to Enoch, who was before the deluge, it is written in the sacred Book that they disappeared, but so that no one knew that they died."

It is a fact of history that some have escaped death and some have lived after death. History, then, vindicates the reasonableness of our hope.

IMMORTALITY

III.—Justice Demands

A Life to Come

Our God is a God of justice. To deny that justice is one of His essential attributes is to underestimate His moral excellence. Speaking of the necessity for a final judgment, Dr. Blake said:

“But we find that at present justice is ‘meted out’ only in part. Those whom we call good are frequently left to struggle with poverty, and pine in affliction, while bold transgressors of the laws of God and man often pass their days in peace and affluence. Many crimes are secret—unknown to all but the guilty,

IMMORTALITY

and, of public crimes, the authors are not always discovered, or they escape from justice by flight, or, what is worst of all, they frequently evade the penalty due to their iniquities by perjury or bribery. Now can such things be reconciled with the justice of God? If we deny the righteous awards of a future judgment, it is impossible. Admitting that in this life, the good, to some extent, have their reward, and that the vicious are frequently overtaken with condign punishment, yet so long as there is a solitary exception in the case of either class, the justice of God must demand a hereafter

IMMORTALITY

to adjust these things. Is there not a recompense for a Job in affliction, for a Lazarus in poverty, for a John Bunyan in prison, and for a Christian martyr at the stake?" To be reasonable, we must expect a life to come in which God will vindicate and consummate this wonderful principle of justice.

**IV.—Because of the Serious Inequality
Between Physical Possibilities and
the Mental and Moral Blueprint of
Life's Hopes, Plans and Purposes:**

Our goals are not reached here, because life's bud is plucked before it has time to unfold into the full flower of one's ideals. In the 11th chapter of He-

IMMORTALITY

brews, in the 13th and 14th verses we read of the patriarchs that they “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.” And in the 16th verse, “But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly.”

So in life's journey, we are strangers and pilgrims here; our goal is far into the land of immortality. The physical grows weary and worn with the journey, but not so with the advancing spirit. The serious question before us is, “What bearing will this physical col-

IMMORTALITY

lapse have upon the journey?" I often take over-night trips on the train. I plan, I hope, I expect to reach finally my destination. But I have not gotten far on the journey when my eyes become heavy and my body grows tired. I am compelled to close my eyes and sleep. Had I never taken this nap before, I might suffer anxiety and wonder if this unconscious sleep is to interrupt my journey. But after I have slept, the morning breaks, the sun rises, my eyes open. The porter calls; I am told that I have reached my destination. Yes, I have dreams, hopes, aspirations, ambi-

IMMORTALITY

tions and plans that I have not time to fully realize before this earthly life comes to a close, but I think that I am reasonable in hoping to realize them when the sleep of death is over, and I am permitted to awake with His likeness.

V.—Because of the Universal Law Of Demand and Supply

Throughout the realm of nature, the supply has been provided for practically every demand. Even a mere man would not think of making a lock without making the key. Where you find the reed, you find the breeze. When God allowed

IMMORTALITY

us to experience hunger, He supplied food. Where we find thirst, we find drink. The same God who gave us winter, gave us also material for clothes, and fuel for fire. I cannot trace this wonderful law very far without being constrained to pause long enough to adore Him who enacted this beautiful law. I exclaim with the Psalmist, "Marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." This law becomes still more wonderful when I discover that it not only meets physical needs, but that it obtains in that tenderer side of life, where the heart's affections and

IMMORTALITY

emotions make demands just as serious and tremendous as those of the physical. No, I cannot think that God would create hunger without supplying food. I cannot believe that He would create thirst without providing a supply for its demand. He would not create within us an instinctive desire and expectation simply for our disappointment. It is evident that man has, as a very conspicuous part of his nature, a serious demand and a pathetic cry for a life after death. According to this wonderful and universal law it is but reasonable that we should hope for a life after death to meet this serious demand.

IMMORTALITY

VI.—Humanity Instinctively Believes in Immortality

Traverse the globe, search every nationality, tribe and clan, regardless of religious training, and you will be impressed that God has placed within humanity an instinctive consciousness of immortality. Men do not agree as to the nature of immortality, and some indeed have very crude and undeveloped ideas, but upon close investigation we find that the germ of hope is there. The savage Indian, so close to nature's heart, anticipated the Happy Hunting Ground, and so strong was his faith that he often

IMMORTALITY

wanted his bow and arrow, or his gun, buried with him. He expected to use them again. His ideas were crude, but the germ of hope was there.

From what we can learn of the old Semitic religions, they, like the Indians, were not informed as to the idea of a glorious resurrection, but they in some way yoked immortality with the maintenance of posterity, and childlessness was considered a great curse. So we see that, though undeveloped, the germ of hope was there.

ZOROASTRIANISM, the religion of Persia, was a religion of ancestral wor-

IMMORTALITY

ship. They held sacred feasts with the consecration of cakes on the anniversaries of their deaths, thinking that the souls of the departed should be fed. So we see the germ of hope was there.

BRAHMANISM supposes that there is a wide stream between this world and the next.

BUDDHISM teaches transmigration of souls, which is of course a crude idea of immortality.

NIRVANA, or Nigban, is the goal of Buddhism. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding as to the real meaning of Nirvana. Some have

IMMORTALITY

thought that it meant annihilation; others say, a swallowing up into the Deity, and still others say that it means a state of perfect rest. Buddha once said: "Those only who have arrived at Nirvana are at rest." Frank S. Dobbins, who has treated the question carefully and fully in the "Story of the World's Worship," does not agree that it means annihilation, but he assures us that the Buddhists of today believe in a definitely located paradise. Annihilation would not harmonize with their idea of transmigration of souls. But what is meant by transmigration of souls?

IMMORTALITY

They think that at the death of the body the soul may pass into another body. The body into which it goes may be that of an animal. We are told that they do not kill animals for fear of annoying the souls of men who have died. On the other hand, Mr. Dobbins tells us that the Jains, a Buddhist sect, conducted successfully a hospital for animals in Bombay. So from this, Nirvana cannot mean annihilation. Buddhism believes that the life of the soul is perpetual after the death of the body.

HINDUISM is a revised Buddhism, and teaches the same idea of transmigration.

IMMORTALITY

CHINESE WORSHIP: Confucianism, according to Frank S. Dobbins, teaches that a man has three souls. When the man dies, one soul remains with the body in its resting place, one lives in the ancestral table in the home, and the third lives in heaven.

The Chinese Bridge-Ladder ceremony indicates their belief in a future life. In this ceremony they produce some kind of resemblance to a bridge and a ladder. The bridge is to help the deceased in crossing streams, and the ladder is to help him over steep places on his journey.

IMMORTALITY

MOHAMMEDANISM teaches not only the immortality of the soul, but also the resurrection of the body.

Dr. Blake says of the immortality of the soul: "This doctrine was believed by the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Persians, the Scythians, the Celts, the Druids, the Greeks, and the Romans. Indeed, there has never been a nation found on the face of the earth so crude and barbarous in which there was not fondly cherished a belief in an existence after death. Surely a belief thus general—a belief bounded by no clime, and limited to no age—must be referred to the great Author of life as its source.

IMMORTALITY

And if so, must it not be true?"

Since this belief is so universal, it is surely a safe conclusion to class any who might not so believe as an exception to the rule.

The consciousness of a life beyond the grave seems to be a part of our nature. It seems natural and instinctive for humanity to believe in and reach forth for immortality to satisfy the hunger of the soul, just as it is for the newborn babe to instinctively expect food.

When Longfellow said:

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul,"

IMMORTALITY

he advanced no new theory. He simply painted a word picture of one of the most conspicuous instincts in human psychology.

I love R. L. Taylor's dream of heaven:

"What heaven is I know not, but I long have dreamed of its purple hills; and its fields of light blossoming with immortal beauty; of its brooks of laughter; its rivers of song, and its palace of eternal love. I long have dreamed that every bird which sings its life out here may sing forever there in the tree of life, and every consecrated soul that suffers here may rest among its flowers and live and love forever. I long have

IMMORTALITY

dreamed of opal towers and burnished domes, but what care I for gate of pearl or street of gold, if I can meet the loved ones who have blessed me here, and see the glorified faces of father and mother and the boy brother who died among the bursting buds of hope; and take in my arms again my baby who fell asleep ere her little tongue had learned to lisp, 'Our Father who art in heaven'? What care I for crown of stars and harp of gold if I can love and laugh and sing with them forever in the smile of my Saviour and my God?"

The office of an artist is not to in-

IMMORTALITY

vent, but to picture (the true likeness of) that which already exists. Mr. Taylor was truly an artist. In his beautiful dream of heaven, he advanced no new theory, but he beautifully depicted in words the instinctive dreams, hopes and longings that have thrilled the hearts of humanity in all ages.

When Fillmore Bennett wrote "In the Sweet By and By," he advanced no new theory. The sentiment is as old as the needs of men. But who is so dense that he cannot see the artistic beauty of that graphic composition?

When I review these wonderful words

IMMORTALITY

of Longfellow, Taylor and Bennett, I am constrained to acknowledge their worth and beauty in the following language of the great Addison, who had reviewed the philosophy of Plato on this question:

“It must be so; Plato, thou reasonest
 well!
Else whence this pleasing hope, this
 fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward
 horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks
 the soul
Back on herself, and startles at de-
 struction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an
 hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man!”

IMMORTALITY

This strong conviction which Joseph Addison cherished in life sustained him in death, as is revealed in his dying words, quoted on page 79.

CONSCIENCE. This instinctive belief in immortality embraces the conscience. This silent monitor whispers to all that—

“ 'Tis not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.”

How is it that the assassin is crazed on his death bed, while great men of God have died with peace in their hearts and shouts of triumph on their lips? Was conscience saying to the one, “Though

IMMORTALITY

you may have deceived others and escaped punishment in this life, you cannot evade the high court of God, nor escape the low prison of eternity?" Was it saying to the other, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

VII.—Arguments from "Analogy"

In our treatment of the questions, "Why Are We Not Permitted to Literally See God's Face, and Hear His Voice in This Life Rather Than Be Permitted to Commune with Him Through Prayer and Faith?" and "The Psychology of Religious Doubts and Fears," I advance

IMMORTALITY

many arguments from analogy which support not only the possibility, but also the probability, of a future life. I will not repeat. But I will call attention to, and quote the wonderful words of W. J. Bryan and the late R. L. Taylor on this great question:

Mr. Bryan said of the soul:

“If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected the soul of man, who was made in the image of his Creator? If He so stoops to give to the rosebud,

IMMORTALITY

whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He withhold the words of hope from the souls of men when the frosts of winter come? If Matter, mute and inanimate is changed by the force of nature into a multitude of forms that never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay?"

Mr. Taylor said of the body:

"The flowers of the field rising from countless graves, the unfolding leaves of the forest heralding the approach of

IMMORTALITY

summer, the orchards and meadows bursting into bloom, and myriads of winged minstrels filling the world with melody, are all the evangels of the Lord, demonstrating before our very eyes the universal victory of life over death. Mr. President, look how the rose hears the far-away call of the sun and blushes into the presence of its God. Look how the violet comes forth from its tiny tomb and opens its glad blue eyes to greet the spring. Are they not God's own answer to the question, 'If a man die, shall he live again?'

"If the germs of inanimate life, buried

IMMORTALITY

beneath the sod, so surely respond to the silent command of summer, who can doubt that man shall spring up out of the unconscious dust into eternal life when God shall call? Can it be that the grass and the flowers are resurrected from the sod of earth, while man, for whom they were made, must sleep on forever?"

VIII.—The Testimony of the Dying

I well remember my first trip to visit my father and mother after they made their home at Clarksville, Tenn. I took the Louisville & Nashville train at Mc-



IMMORTALITY

Kenzie, Tenn. We did not move so rapidly while climbing Tennessee Ridge in the first half of the trip, but when we had passed the crest, the train seemed to increase her speed, and just as we were nearing the hour when we were to arrive, I looked from the window and the train was on a great trestle. The sun had gone down. The dark shadows of night were gathering. Below was a dark valley. I then discovered that we were approaching a river; I could see its chilly waters. Then I lifted my eyes, and saw the lights of the city on the hills beyond the river. We crossed the



IMMORTALITY

bridge that spans the Cumberland, and soon we reached the station, and I met my loved ones, who had been waiting for me. I said in my mind, "This is a picture of the journey of life." Some of us are now climbing to the crest. Others are rapidly advancing in the last half of the journey. In the evening of life when we pass through the dark valley and approach that last dreaded river, will we be able to lift our eyes and see the lights of the city on the other shore?

Candidly, should not the testimony of those who have spoken while in the twilight of two worlds assure us beyond

IMMORTALITY

doubt that, "In the night of death hope sees a star, and, listening, love can hear the rustle of a wing"? Certainly so, for dying men would tell no untrue tales.

In conclusion I call your attention to those whose dying words are my last argument in this effort to assure you that if a man die, he shall live again:

"Bless you, there is no river here."—
Bishop Haven.

"What shall I say? Christ is altogether lovely; His glorious angels are come for me."—John Bailey.

"See in what peace a Christian can die."—Joseph Addison.

IMMORTALITY

“I am not disappointed.”—Bishop Janes.

“Such singing! Do you hear it?”—John Carey.

“I did not suppose it was so sweet to die.”—Saurez, the Spanish Theologian.

“If this be dying, it is the easiest thing imaginable.”—Lady Glinorchy.

“Rest, perfect rest.”—Thomas Burrows.

“All is light.”—Theophilus Pugh.

“Tell my brethren I am on the rock. There is no other foundation.”—Joseph Hollis.

“Talk to me, Jesus.”—Adam Nightingale.

IMMORTALITY

“Glory! glory! glory! hallelujah, Jesus reigns.”—Jesse Lee.

“If I had strength to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die.”—Wm. Hunter.

I quote Dr. R. A. Torrey in “The Bible and Its Christ,” published by Fleming H. Revell Company, concerning the death of the great Moody:

“Early on the morning of his departure from this world his eldest son was sitting beside his bed. He heard his father speaking in a low voice; he leaned over to listen, and these were the words that he heard: ‘Earth is re-

IMMORTALITY

ceding; heaven is opening; God is calling.' 'You are dreaming, father,' said the son. 'No, Will, this is no dream; I have been within the gates. I have seen the children's faces.' The family were summoned. Mr. Moody rallied. A while after, he began to sink again, and he was heard to say, 'Is this death? This is not bad; there is no valley. This is bliss. This is glorious.' 'Father,' said his daughter, 'you must not leave us. We cannot spare you.' The dying man replied: 'I am not going to throw my life away; if God has any more work for me to do, I will get well and do it; but if God is calling, I must be up and off.' He rallied again. He gained sufficient

IMMORTALITY

strength to arise from the bed and walk over to the window. He sat down in a chair, and talked with his family. He began to think he would recover, and was contemplating sending for his pastor to pray for his recovery, but, beginning to sink again, he asked them to help him back to the bed. As he was sinking, his daughter knelt by the bed and commenced to pray for his recovery, but he said: 'No, no, Emma; don't pray that. God is calling. This is my coronation day. I have been looking forward to it.' And the heroic warrior swept into the presence of the King."

“THE MYSTERIES OF RELIGION SIMPLIFIED”

This is a special series by James M. McLeskey, presenting evidence to vindicate the reasonableness of the claims of Christianity. The subjects are as follows:

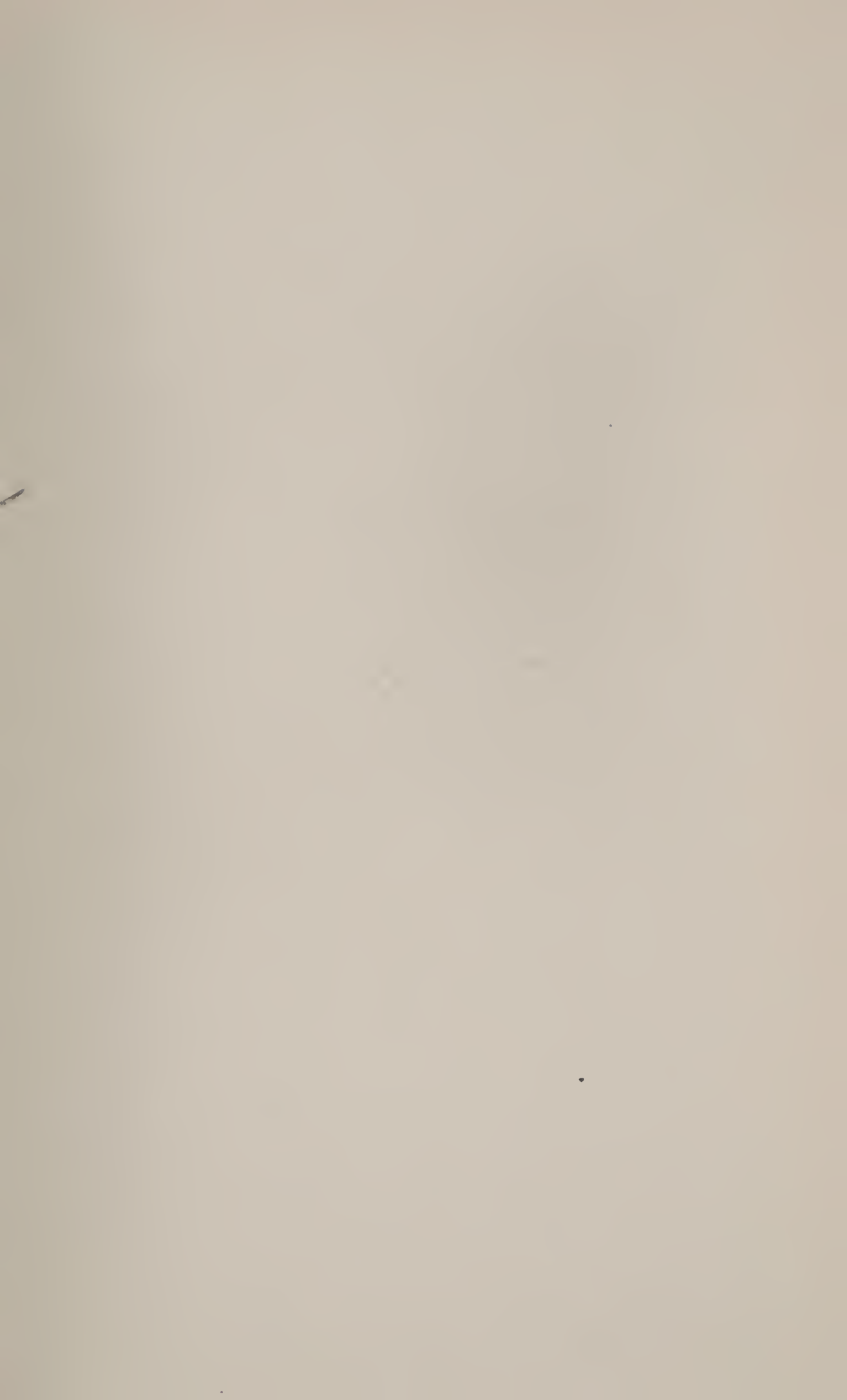
1. Is There a God, Who Existed Before the Beginning?
2. Why Are We Not Permitted to Literally See God's Face and Hear His Voice in This Life, Rather Than Commune with Him Through Prayer and Faith?
3. Why Was It Necessary for Christ to Die in Order That We Be Saved?
4. If the Bible Teaches the Way of Life, Why Such Difference of In-

terpretation?

5. How May We Know That the Bible Is Genuine?
6. How May We Know That the Bible Is Inspired?
7. Are the Scriptures Scientific?
8. Alleged Errors and Contradictions in the Bible.
9. Why Not Miracles Today as in the Days of the Apostles?
10. The Deity of Christ.
11. Is Christianity the Only True Religion?
12. The Psychology of Religious Doubts and Fears.
13. Immortality.



21

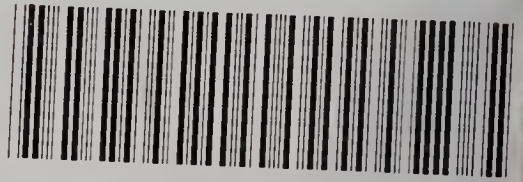


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2005

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 652 917 3